

Section II. REMARKS

The pending claims in the application are 1-4, 6-17, 19-22, 24-32 and 34-40.

Allowance of Claims 35-40

The allowance of claims 35-40 in the February 18, 2004 Office Action (at page 5, paragraph 14 thereof) is acknowledged.

Prospectively Allowable Subject Matter of Claims 16, 19 and 23-28, and Amendment of Claims

At page 5, paragraph 13 of the February 18, 2004 Office Action, claims 16, 19 and 23-28 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, claim 1 has been amended herein to set forth the substance of claims 19, 23, 24, 27 and 28 (including the substance of their intervening depended-on claims), as a Markush selection group of operations performable by the central control system as enabled by the reagent management system.

Claims 18 and 23 have correspondingly been cancelled, and claims 19-22, 24, 27 and 28 have been amended to depend from claim 1. Allowed claim 39 has been amended to correct a minor typographical error therein.

By incorporation of the allowable subject matter of claims 19, 23, 24, 27 and 28 in claim 1, claim 1 has been placed in form and condition for allowance, together with claims 2-4, 6-17, 19-22, 24-32 and 34 of dependent form thereunder.

Since claims 35-40 have been allowed, all pending claims 1-4, 6-17, 19-22, 24-32 and 34-40, as now amended, are now in condition for allowance.

On the basis of such amendments, the rejections in the February 18, 2004 Office Action have been overcome, and are thereby traversed in application to the claims as now pending in the application.

If any fee or charge is determined to be properly payable in connection with the entry of this Amendment, the Commissioner hereby is authorized to charge same to Deposit Account Number 08-3284 of Intellectual Property/Technology Law.

CONCLUSION

Claims 1-4, 6-17, 19-22, 24-32 and 34-40, as amended, are now in form and condition for allowance. Issue of a Notice of Allowance therefore is requested.

If any issues remain outstanding, incident to the formal allowance of the application, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at (919) 419-9350 to discuss same, in order that this application may be passed to issue at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,



Steven J. Hultquist
Reg. No. 28,021
Attorney for Applicants

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY/
TECHNOLOGY LAW**
P.O. Box 14329
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
Phone: (919) 419-9350
Fax: (919) 419-9354
Attorney File No.: 2778-119